



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 18, 2019**

### **District 157-C January 16, 2019 Board of Education Meeting Recap**

FRANKFORT, IL — The regular Frankfort School District 157-C Board of Education meeting of January 16, 2019, was called to order by Board President Gina Briese at 7:00 p.m. The roll call was taken, and a quorum was present. The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board approved the Open and Closed Session minutes of the regular meeting of December 19, 2018.

No one spoke during the Public Forum portion of the meeting.

During reports to the Board, Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds Rodney Davis reported that winter break was productive in his department. Floors and carpeted areas were cleaned, some painting was completed at Hickory Creek Middle School, and fire inspections were completed at all three schools. The district received positive feedback from the inspector, Davis said. As the region is experiencing cooler temperatures, Davis and his team are monitoring building temperatures and are preparing for snowfall predicted in the coming weeks. Board President Gina Briese asked Davis about cameras installed in the Chelsea hallways, which were mentioned in his report. Davis said they were added to corners of the hallways to show lockers, primarily in case the dean needs to review footage for safety concerns.

Hickory Creek Principal Will Seidelmann reported on a \$5,000 grant Librarian Marybeth Raynes and sixth-grade teacher Renee Grady received from Dollar General in recognition of reading initiatives. Additionally, Dollar General surprised them with an additional \$10,000 for the library at the school. The money will be used for Sora e-books and for the addition of reading libraries for English teachers. "Congratulations to both of you," Briese said to Raynes and Grady, who were in attendance at the meeting. "This is excellent."

Chelsea Intermediate School Principal Doug Wernet reported on a planned change for the school to move away from its Tiger schedule and toward a quarterly ENCORE schedule next year to create a more consistent schedule for students and teachers. Currently, students attend a different ENCORE course each day of the week throughout the school year. With the quarterly schedule, students would attend the same ENCORE course each day for nine weeks and then switch to a different course. Wernet said he received feedback from teachers that aspects of the Tiger schedule negatively impact instruction and teacher collaboration time. He said he expects the quarterly schedule will increase teacher plan time and student success. "Instead of Spanish once a week, students would have it day in and day out," he said. "We're looking forward to seeing the progress from the consistency instead of the stop-start model." Superintendent Dr. Maura Zinni added that Hickory Creek students achieved greater success from a similar focused schedule. Briese asked if the planned changes would impact the amount of time spent on

math and English. Wernet said math would increase from 80 minutes to 90 minutes, and English would decrease from 165 minutes to 140 minutes. He said he believes that would help prepare students for the move to Hickory Creek, where English receives roughly 80 minutes.

Grand Prairie Elementary School Principal Kirsten Frankovich reported on professional development at the school. In January, teachers are delivering professional development by sharing success stories and ideas from their own classrooms with their colleagues. In February, staff will begin three-week courses focusing on specific topics so staff can implement what they've learned, ask questions and get feedback. "I want to give a shout out to all of the staff for working so hard," Frankovich said. "It's exciting to see."

During administrative reports, Zinni and district administrators presented the State of the District. This was the administrators' fifth year presenting the report, and it focused on the district's progress in its 21st Century Continuous Learning Plan, which is aligned to the district's Strategic Goals. The plan was adopted roughly two-and-a-half years ago and focuses on growth/learning spaces, student outcomes, professional development, financial stability and community partnerships.

In growth/learning spaces, Zinni reported that the district has not seen much fluctuation in its student population or its demographics during the past four years. Director of Technology Jacob Nelson said the district surpassed its timeline for one-to-one laptops for fifth through eighth grades, achieving the goal this school year. In third and fourth grades, there is one laptop cart for every two classrooms. The district moved to use cloud storage and applications, like Office 365, and continues to keep up with upgrades and replacement of hardware. Nelson said the district will plan out the logistics of a technology refresh at Grand Prairie this summer. He added that the district upgraded security cameras at all buildings throughout the year and continues to make improvements to cameras, updated its alarm and monitoring system, integrated phone systems with the intercom systems at the buildings, and underwent Run Hide Fight training.

In student outcomes, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Janet McClarence reported that the one-to-one environment in upper grade levels allowed for the adoption of a social studies Discovery Techbook for sixth through eighth grades. The district also continued to enhance and improve its curriculum offerings by implementing Illinois Math and Science STEM Fusion curriculum in fifth grade, refining English and math units and assessments throughout the district, implementing the Multi-Tiered System of Support throughout the district for academic and social/emotional learning, implementing structured word inquiry lessons for kindergarten through fifth grades, aligning ENCORE courses in kindergarten through fifth grades, and implementing FastBridge progress monitoring across the district to universally track student progress in English and math. The district also enhanced extracurricular activities for students. "We're very proud to get to offer all these activities and have Board support that allows us to give kids opportunities after school," McClarence said. In assessments, the district ranked first in Will County for the percentage of students who met or exceeded combined English and math standards for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers test. It ranked eighth in the state for the percentage of students meeting or exceeding PARCC English standards, up from 26th last year. It ranked fifth in the state for students meeting or exceeding PARCC math standards, up from 16th last year. Additionally, the district ranked second in the state for average English growth percentile and first in the state for average math growth percentile, tracking student's year-to-year improvement. Across demographics, students showed comparable growth. "We're confident our curriculum and instruction is working and paying off," McClarence said.

Director of Special Services Jen Bajda reported that the district serves 317 students who have an individualized education program, and 10 are supported outside of the district. In 2014, the district had 25 students supported outside of the district, meaning it is improving in its ability to meet students' needs within the district. The district serves 29 students in Project B.E.G.I.N., 17 students in early

childhood and provides walk-in services like speech or occupational therapy to a handful of students for one or two days a week. The district serves 125 students who have a 504 plan, meaning they need some additional support. From 2017 to 2018, students with an IEP who met or exceeded English PARCC standards increased from 26 percent to 43 percent. Students with an IEP who met or exceeded math PARCC standards increased from 31 percent to 41 percent. The percentage of students who took the Dynamic Learning Maps-Alternative Assessment and achieved at target or advanced scores increased from 16.9 to 25. Bajda attributed student success to enhanced curriculum, including increased co-teaching. She said the district always aims to teach students in the least restrictive environment possible. "We don't want to place students in special education classrooms if they don't need it," she said. "By increasing co-teaching and having more students in general education classrooms, it really has made a difference over the years."

Zinni highlighted the district's awards from the past year, including Hickory Creek's National Blue Ribbon Award for Educational Excellence and all three schools' Exemplary designations on the Illinois School Report Cards. The Blue Ribbon Award is given to just 300 schools across the nation each year. The Exemplary designations indicate all three of the district's schools rank in the Top 10 percent of schools in the state for student achievement. "That doesn't happen without what we've heard so far," Zinni said. "We've really focused our work on academics and partnerships. The teamwork that goes on is remarkable. The other piece is an emphasis on social/emotional learning." Zinni said the district is heightening its focus on social/emotional learning and support this year for both students and staff, and the MTSS Committee is leading these efforts. "We're thrilled we're getting these kinds of results, and we believe these will be sustainable with the social/emotional focus," she said.

In professional development, Director of Human Resources Shayna Cole said the district worked to expand its instructional coach model for core subjects and technology, implemented a professional development schedule to maximize instructional time, trained teachers on Office 365 so they could create virtual learning environments, and offered in-district credit courses for staff. Additionally, the district standardized its hiring practices, conducting teacher lesson observations during all interviews. "We're in a fortunate place to be able to see candidates in action and have a simulation of the classroom before we make a decision," Cole said. The district expanded its orientation to provide training on expectations, expanded health and wellness initiatives and increased health insurance education.

In financial stability, Director of Business and Operational Services Kate Ambrosini said the district's financial software and reporting tools, Skyward and Forecast5, allow it to create different reports to ensure its finances are accurate and efficient. The district maintains its history of fiscal responsibility by maintaining healthy fund balances and continuing to maximize its property tax abatement, authorized by the Board, to minimize its tax levy. D157-C is one of two districts in Will County to have a AAA bond rating. It also has Recognition Status from the Illinois State Board of Education. To maintain financial stability and a conducive learning environment, the district pursues proactive maintenance, preserves and protects its buildings and implements energy-efficient enhancements. The majority of the district's revenue comes from property taxes. Tax rates have remained consistent over the past five years, and in the past two years, the rate has decreased due to an increase in property values. Ambrosini said the district has an adequacy level equal to its adequacy target, determined by Illinois' evidence-based funding formula. She said this is what districts should aim for, as it means they do not have too much or too little funding to adequately serve their students. D157-C is in Tier 4 of the funding formula, meaning it receives roughly 0.1 percent of new state revenue and retains all previously allocated state funding. Aside from roughly 91 percent local revenue, the district receives 7 percent of its revenue from state funding and 2.5 percent from federal funding. In expenses, 45.8 percent are related to instruction, 2.5 percent for general administration, 33.5 percent for support services and 18.4 percent for other expenditures. The state average is to spend roughly \$8,000 per pupil per year for instruction, and D157-C spends roughly \$6,000 per pupil per year. "This shows our ability to be fiscally responsible and maximize results with what we

have and what we're using," Ambrosini said. The state average is to spend roughly \$13,300 per pupil per year for operations, and D157-C spends roughly \$10,800 per pupil per year."

In community engagement and partnerships, Zinni said the district has an amazing, supportive community. Parent volunteer groups, including the Family School Partnership, Education Foundation, Athletic Boosters, Chorus Boosters and Band/Orchestra Boosters raised more than \$300,000 for the district last year in grants, resources, activities and experiences for students. Zinni said the district is committed to transparency and is diligent about publishing quarterly newsletters, monthly webpage newsletters, and regular press releases and social media updates. It plans to launch a new website this year. The district also encourages students and staff to embrace civic responsibility by giving back through service projects, donations to community organizations and volunteerism.

"I couldn't be more proud to be the superintendent of this school district," Zinni said. "This is a remarkable place for kids to come learn. All the staff members are very committed people who love kids. The Board is always super supportive of what we've brought to them, asking good questions and challenging us. What's happening here is really something, and we should all be pleased to be part of this." Briese said she is proud of everyone and to part of the Board. "It's really exciting to see this growth and achievement," she said. Board Vice President Tom Reidy asked if the district may need to revise the 21st Century Continuous Learning Plan because it is achieving many of the plan's goals. Zinni said the Board could direct the district to update the plan now.

The State of the District presentation will air on Frankfort Community Television Channel 6, and the district will publish information about the schedule once it is available.

Board Secretary Edie Adamski provided the Board with the December 18 Governing Board meeting minutes from Lincoln-Way Special Education District 843.

Family School Partnership Co-President Desiree Lavin presented an update to the Board on the organization's progress this school year. This is Lavin's first year as a co-president, and she said she loves what FSP is able to do. Last year, there was a drop in parent volunteerism, but the organization is seeing increased attendance this year, she said. FSP purchased tickets for roughly 200 students to attend a Chicago Wolves game in February. The organization is planning its Around the World Night for March 14 and Spring Book Fairs for March 4-8 at Hickory Creek, March 4-8 at Chelsea with a Family Night March 6, and March 18-22 at Grand Prairie with a Family Night March 19. "The people who volunteer for this organization are wonderful," Lavin said. "They care about the community and schools and work so hard. Everything is going well this year."

Zinni said the Education Foundation is preparing for its Casino Night, set for March 8 at The Odyssey in Tinley Park, and is looking for corporate sponsors. Tickets are available online at [fsd157c.revtrak.net](http://fsd157c.revtrak.net).

During the superintendent's report, Zinni presented an initial staffing report, which will be updated each month prior to next school year. She said general education is in good shape, and she does not foresee needing to add any sections in any grade levels. Staffing needs for Special Services are yet to be determined, because late winter and early spring are when IEP meetings are conducted. Enrollment in the district's pre-kindergarten programs is increasing, and enrollment in some music programs is also increasing, Zinni said. The administration recommended the addition of a special services coordinator for next school year to provide support to the Special Services Department and its continued growth. Bajda said the largest growth in the department comes from preschool early intervention services, as referrals to early intervention programs are increasing. There is a waitlist of children in need of speech or occupational therapy in Will County, she said. Additionally, the district is receiving more students with disabilities who are moving in to pursue high-quality services. Bajda said these move-ins are steadily

increasing, but the district is also steadily declassifying students teach year after providing intervention services and seeing student success. The special services coordinator would be tasked with overseeing the district's preschool and early intervention services, providing professional development to staff, sitting in on and running IEP meetings and conduct more staff evaluations.

Ambrosini provided the Board with the December 2018 Treasurer's Report and Graphs. In December, the total fund balance decreased by \$5,003,612. Bond payments were due in December accounting for a majority of change in fund balance. Monthly revenue receipts totaled \$3,117,550, primarily due to an inter-fund transfer of \$2 million to the Debt Service Fund to cover the bond payments, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act grant receipts and property tax receipts. Monthly expense disbursements totaled \$8,113,721, primarily due to payroll and accounts payable, including the inter-fund transfer of \$2 million to Debt Service.

There were two Freedom of Information requests that were responded to in a timely manner.

In discussion, Board members agreed they were amenable to the special services coordinator job description so that the district could post the position.

In discussion, the Board reviewed policy updates on Board member oath and conduct; Board member development; insufficient fund checks and debt recovery; safety; hiring process and criteria; expenses, employee ethics, conduct and conflict of interest; substitute teachers; curriculum content; attendance and truancy; health, eye and dental examinations, immunizations, and exclusion of students; student behavior; exemption from physical education, administering medicines to students; suicide and depression awareness and prevention; and student athlete concussions and head injuries. Briese asked Board members to let Zinni know if they had questions or comments as they reviewed the policies this month.

In discussion, Briese said she and Zinni reviewed Closed Session meeting minutes from June through November 2018 and not recommending releasing any of the minutes to the public.

In discussion, Briese said the audio recordings of Closed Session meetings from February through July 2017 may now be destroyed, as they are older than 18 months.

The Board took action to approve the transfer of funds from the Educational Fund to the Bond and Interest Fund to abate \$3 million in taxes levied for the year 2018 to pay debt service on the district's General Obligation Refunding School Bonds, Series 2012, and General Obligation Refunding School Bonds, Series 2013. Ambrosini said this benefits the district financially and benefits the taxpayers by minimizing tax rate changes. .

The Board took action to approve a transportation agreement with Lincoln-Way Community High School District 210 for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Board Member Edith Lutz abstained.

The Board took action to approve the Chelsea Master Plan created by FGM Architects.

The Board took action to approve the employment of Molly O'Shea as a full-time long-term substitute kindergarten teacher at Grand Prairie Elementary School with a start date of January 28, 2019, and tentative end date of April 30, 2019, or until the assignment ends, contingent upon the receipt and evaluation of employment documentation required by District 157-C and the Illinois State Board of Education.

The Board took action to approve the employment of Jennifer Kazmer as a full-time special education paraprofessional at Chelsea Intermediate School with a start date of February 4, 2019, contingent upon the receipt and evaluation of employment documentation required by District 157-C and the Illinois State Board of Education.

The Board took action to approve the intention to retire submitted by Patrick Feehan, full-time teacher at Hickory Creek Middle School, following the 2022-2023 school year with the incentive option per the agreement between Frankfort School District 157-C and the Teachers' Association. EL: good teacher will miss him.

The Board took action to approve the payment of bills for December 2018 as presented.

In the consent agenda, the Board approved the student fee schedule for the 2019-2020 school year; the 2019-2020 school calendar; the 2019-2020 Parent/Student Handbook; the job description for an assistant network administrator; the acknowledgement of Closed Session meeting minutes from June 2018 through November 2018 and the recommendation that minutes from June 20, September 19 and November 14 meetings from this period not be released for public record; the destruction of audio recordings of Closed Session meetings from February 2017 through July 2017 due to the fact that 18 months have passed since being recorded, and the written minutes have been approved by the Board; a resolution to authorize the preparation of the fiscal year 2020 tentative budget; the distribution of certified staff and educational support personnel seniority lists to the exclusive bargaining representative; and Comcast/ICN as the district's E-Rate contractor for internet transport, internet access and a router.

The Board adjourned the regular meeting at 8:22 p.m. and entered into Closed Session at 8:25 p.m. for the purposes of personnel issues of specific employees, a student issue, pending litigation and collective bargaining.

The Board adjourned Closed Session, returned to the regular meeting and adjourned the regular meeting at 9:07 p.m.

The next regular District 157-C Board of Education meeting will be held on February 20, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. at the District Office, 10482 W. Nebraska St. in Frankfort, Illinois.